

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE FOR RURAL RESIDENTS DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCE

The Eighth Annual Water and Waste Conference was held in Columbia, Missouri on December 2, 2004 for over 165 consulting engineers, regional planning commissions, community planners, grant writers and other consultants from across Missouri. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss water and sewer opportunities for residents and communities in rural Missouri. The programs are delivered through a partnership of federal, state and local partners working together to assist rural areas of Missouri.

Gregory C. Branum, State Director for USDA Rural Development, said, "The success of helping rural citizens is dependent upon the partnering with professional engineers, planners, and other consultants. This conference explained the mission of Rural Development and the commitment to target financial and technical resources in areas of greatest need through activities of greatest potential. Funding environmentally safe water and wastewater systems mirrors one of President Bush's initiatives and exemplifies the Rural Development mission – committed to the future of rural communities".

The partners participating in the conference included the Missouri Department of Economic Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (Public Drinking Water, Water Pollution and State Revolving Fund), Missouri Rural Water Association (MRWA), Midwest Assistance Program (MAP), and USDA Rural Development.

Clark Thomas, Rural Development Director of the Community and Business Programs, discussed some of Rural Development's policies and funding for this fiscal year. He stated, "The Missouri Water & Wastewater Review Committee partner to insure all available funds in Missouri are utilized to assist as many communities as possible. Even with limited loan and grant funds, financing should continue to be directed to the smallest communities with the lowest incomes with priority given to utilization of grants in areas lacking running water, flush toilets and modern sewage disposal systems." He emphasized that user rates must be comparable to systems in similar communities and we must be sure we are not duplicating services where communities can share services, such as water sources and treatment of water and sewage. With the reduction of grant funds from all state and federal agencies, rates may need to be higher than in previous years.

Thomas further stated, "The engineers, the regional planning commissions, the grant writers, and others in attendance are key partners working on the team to help deserving communities reach the goal of having essential water and sewer systems." Daniel Garcia, Missouri USDA Rural Development Engineer, discussed current engineering issues and Missouri policies relating to water and sewer systems.

Several other key partners in helping rural communities on water and sewer projects in attendance and making presentations included: Midwest Assistance Program represented by Linda Cyrus, Rural Development Specialist; the



Pictured from Left to Right: Clark Thomas, Director, Rural Development Community & Business Programs, Columbia; Jerry Gilmore, P.E., Howard Green Associates, Rolla; Dave Krehbiel, P.E., Krehbiel Engineering, Camdenton; Daniel Garcia, P.E. Rural Development State Engineer, Columbia; Dennis Siders, Midwest Assistance Program, Fredericktown; Mike Hollis, Wastewater Trainer, Missouri Rural Water Association, Columbia; Elizabeth Grove, General Manager, Clarence Cannon Wholesale Water Commission, Stoutsville, Mo; Dave Waller, Manager, Public Water Supply District No. 1 of Macon County; John Chittenden, P.E., Waters and Associates, Sikeston; Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for Rural Development, Columbia

Missouri Rural Water Association represented by Mike Hollis, Wastewater Training Specialist; Missouri Department of Natural Resources including Mary Clark, Stephen Jones and Leland Neher; and Andy Papen, Program Manager of the Missouri Department of Economic Development discussed the Community Development Block Grant Program(CDBG) and the Missouri Water and Waste Review Committee.

Elizabeth Grove, General Manager, of the Clarence Cannon Wholesale Water Commission (CCWWC), talked about the role of wholesale water systems in Missouri. The CCWWC provides a supply of water to twenty entities in thirteen counties in northeast Missouri.

Dave Waller, Manager, of Public Supply District (PWSD) # 1 of Macon County discussed the challenges of a Public Water Supply District. The PWSD provides services to approximately 4,400 rural users.

Anyone seeking more information about the Water and Waste programs or any other USDA Rural Development programs may visit the Homepage at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/>

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

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